



**SUMMER 2025/26**

# THE PSN POST

## Light and Joy this Christmas Season



**Christmas is a season of light, joy, faith, and connection. For many, it's a time of celebration – twinkling lights, shared meals, and the warmth of whānau. Yet for others, it can be a time of quiet struggle. While the world sparkles with festive colour, some families are facing financial hardship, loneliness and uncertainty.**

At Presbyterian Support Northern, we hold close the true message of Christmas – love made visible through compassion and care. Just as the birth of Christ reminds us that hope can enter the world in the most humble of ways, your generosity brings light into the lives of those who need it most.

This year, your kindness has helped parents put food on the table, ensured children and families feel safe and cared for, reminded older people they are not forgotten and supported those considering suicide to find strength in life.

Your giving spirit reflects the faith, love and community at the heart of Christmas. It is this generosity that makes our work possible.

I've now been in this role for a year. During that time, I've visited all our sites, sat in

the Lifeline call centre listening to calls, spent time in our dementia day services, visited our refuges, and met with schools hosting our Social Workers in Schools. I've seen first-hand the difference your support makes – please never underestimate its impact.

As summer unfolds with long evenings and joyful gatherings, I hope you find space for rest, reflection and gratitude. May the light of Christmas bring peace to your heart, and the new year bring renewed faith and possibility.

Thank you for being part of our PSN whānau. Your compassion is a gift that lasts far beyond the season.

With gratitude and every blessing,

**Shaun Greaves**

Chief Executive, Kaiwhakahaere Matua

Christmas:

## A Time of Joy – But Not for Everyone



Christmas is often portrayed as ‘the most wonderful time of the year’ – filled with laughter, food, gatherings, gifts, and festive cheer. But for many New Zealanders, the reality is far from joyful. Money worries, loneliness, anxiety, grief, and family tensions can make the festive season feel overwhelming and stressful.

*At this time of year, the support we offer at PSN is more important than ever. Here’s how we help people navigate the challenges of Christmas:*

### Mental Health and Loneliness – Lifeline



The holiday season can intensify feelings of isolation and mental strain. For some, the pressure to feel happy or ‘get into the spirit’ can worsen anxiety or depression. Tragically, suicide doesn’t take a holiday, and the festive season can be a particularly vulnerable and triggering time. Lifeline is here to provide immediate support to anyone struggling or in distress – offering a listening ear, guidance and hope for those facing stress, loneliness and emotional pain.

**Lifeline counsellors are here if you need to talk. They provide safe, free, and confidential support. Free call 0800 LIFELINE or free text HELP.**

### Family Challenges – Family Works



The holiday season can magnify money pressures, family tensions, and parenting challenges. Family Works offers counselling, parenting support, budgeting advice, and practical assistance to help families navigate these difficulties. Family Works helps to empower families to manage stress, strengthen relationships, and find moments of joy amid the season’s pressures.

### Safety and Abuse – Shine



For some, Christmas is not about gifts or festivities – it’s about survival. Individuals and children trapped in unsafe homes may be facing various forms of family violence. Shine provides refuge, safety, and wrap-around support to help people escape harm and rebuild their lives. With Shine’s support, people can find a secure place to receive the services they need to recover and thrive, even when the world outside feels frightening.

**If you’re concerned about your safety or someone else’s, phone the Shine Helpline on 0508 744 633. If you or someone else is in immediate danger call Police on 111.**

### Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults – Enliven



For older people and those living with disabilities, Christmas can be a particularly lonely time. Many feel isolated from family, disconnected from community, or simply overwhelmed by the pressures of the season. Enliven offers aged care and disability support services that provide companionship, social connection, and meaningful activities, ensuring that older adults and those with additional needs don’t have to face the festive season alone.

**Learn more at [enlivennorthern.org.nz](http://enlivennorthern.org.nz) or phone 0800 365 4836.**

**For those on limited incomes, the pressure to buy gifts or join festive events can be overwhelming. PSN’s services provide practical help, emotional support, and community connection – ensuring people feel safe, cared for, and not alone at Christmas.**

Your support helps families, children and older adults feel comfort, hope and joy this festive season. For many, Christmas is simply about feeling safe and supported. Together, we can share the true spirit of the season – give hope, give support, give joy.

*Donate today: [psn.org.nz/donate](https://psn.org.nz/donate)*



A Wheelie Good Surprise:

## Helping Waikato Kids Find Freedom and Fun

**Familyworks**

**Six children in the Waikato region have received a special surprise – six brand-new BMX bikes, complete with helmets, locks, and even some cheese – donated to Family Works Waikato by Open Country.**

Founded in 2001, Open Country is New Zealand's largest independent dairy processor and the world's second-largest exporter of whole milk powder. It currently has seven production sites across New Zealand, three of them in the Waikato at Horotiu, Waharoa and Mokai. Open Country produces milk powders, cheese, frozen milk concentrate, ice cream, and butter. Most of Open Country's products are exported to markets across the globe.

The bikes were presented to PSN Social Services' General Manager Grenville Hendricks and Family Works' Waikato Area Manager Lynne Dunne by Open Country's Chief People Officer Hennie Peters, and Health and Safety Manager Wesley Bartlett.

"This is really going to brighten the lives of six children who could really do with a boost," says Lynne Dunne. "We are so grateful to Open Country for their generosity – these bikes will bring joy, freedom and fun to kids who need it most. And the cheese will benefit local families."

The gift has a special back story. Staff from across Open Country – including engineers,



processing plant workers, and transport teams – came together during their annual Health and Safety Conference for a fun team-building challenge. Instead of simply competing, they built the bikes with the aim of donating them to children who could do with some good news.

*"We wanted to donate the bikes to give some kids a chance to be kids."*

— Hennie Peters



**This act of kindness shows how powerful community connections can be. It truly takes a village to raise a child, and with support from local businesses like Open Country and the wider community, Family Works can help give children the simple joys of childhood: fun, freedom, and a chance to just be kids.**



PSN General Manager of Social Services Grenville Hendricks and Open Country's Chief People Officer Hennie Peters.

Warm Heart, Winter Days:

## Enliven Waikato's Midwinter Celebration



# Enliven

*Enliven's two Waikato Day Services groups came together for a joyful Midwinter Christmas lunch on a beautiful sunny Friday at Enliven's site in Hillcrest, Hamilton.*

The hall was transformed with sparkling Christmas decorations, twinkling lights, and festive touches that set the scene for a heart-warming celebration. Some of our Day Services members even dressed in Christmas-themed outfits, adding extra cheer to the occasion.

Approximately 40 Day Services members were served a delicious roast dinner with all the trimmings, enjoying the hearty meal while sharing laughter and conversation. The aroma of the food and the buzz of friendly chatter

filled the hall, creating a warm and welcoming environment for everyone.

Kaitakawaenga (cultural advisor) Tim Tahapehi opened the event with a heartfelt welcome and blessing, and Day Services staff were on hand to support members, ensuring everyone felt included and cared for throughout the afternoon.

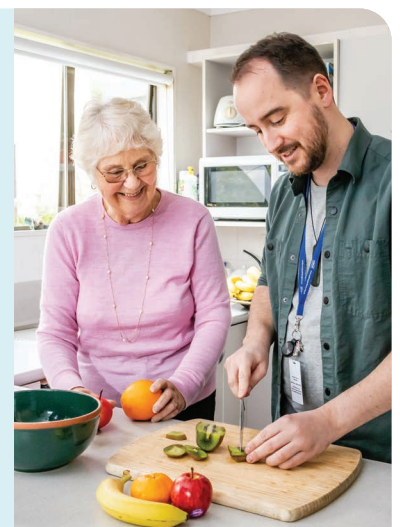
The event was more than just a meal – it was a chance for members to connect, share stories, and enjoy companionship in a safe, festive setting. Smiles and happy memories filled the room, highlighting the importance of community, connection, and belonging.



## What are Enliven Day Services?

**Enliven is part of Presbyterian Support Northern and provides a range of services that help older people and those living with disabilities stay active, connected and independent.**

Day Services are one of the many ways Enliven supports the community – offering safe, welcoming spaces where people can socialise, enjoy activities, and build friendships. These programmes bring joy and connection while giving families and carers peace of mind, knowing their loved ones are supported.



**Want to know more about Enliven Day Services?**

Please get in touch on 0800 373 654 or visit [enlivennorthern.org.nz](http://enlivennorthern.org.nz)



# Give a Gift That Lasts Beyond the Season

Christmas is a time of giving – a time to show those we care about how much they mean to us. We wrap up presents with love, write cards with heartfelt messages, and gather with family and friends to celebrate. But there is a gift that can outlast the tinsel, the lights, and even the memories of this festive season – a gift that truly keeps on giving.

And your act of giving can do even more – it can inspire others. A bequest sends a powerful message about what truly matters: compassion, generosity, and a commitment to the greater good. It shows those around you that there's more to life than material things. A gift in your Will can also encourage friends, family, and future generations to reflect on their own values and consider how they too can 'do their bit' to make the world a kinder, more hopeful place.

Every year, PSN helps many individuals and families navigate challenges that don't stop when the festive season begins or ends. From those experiencing hardship to people facing mental health challenges or unsafe living situations, your gift can provide steady, life-changing support exactly when it's needed most.

*Imagine a world where the kindness and generosity of today continues to create brighter tomorrows. That is the power of a bequest! It allows you to:*

## Support ongoing programmes

Your gift helps fund critical services that adapt to the needs of our communities.

## Reach more families in need

Your bequest can enable us to extend our services and respond when more people need a helping hand.

## Leave a meaningful legacy

Your generosity will continue to make a difference long after the Christmas lights are packed away.



At this time of year, as we reflect on what truly matters, consider the enduring impact you can make. We give thanks and honour those who care for others, even beyond their lifetime.

## This Christmas, give a gift that lasts. Bequests help...

**Lifeline** to provide calm, compassionate support to people in crisis.

**Family Works** to strengthen families and support children to thrive.

**Shine** to create safer homes and brighter futures for those affected by family violence.

**Enliven** to care for older people, promoting independence and well-being.

For a confidential conversation about including PSN in your Will, please reach out to Vivienne Riddell, our Planned Giving Co-ordinator, at **09 520 8628, 021 329 938**, or **Vivienne.Riddell@psn.org.nz**.



A Lifeline of Hope at Christmas:

## A Call That Restored Hope and Saved a Life

Lifeline

**For many, Christmas is a time of joy and connection – but for others, it can magnify feelings of stress, despair, and even thoughts of self-harm. Lifeline counsellors are there to listen and offer calm, compassionate support when it's needed most.**

One caller shared their story:

*"[Earlier this year after an incident that left me deeply ashamed, I was on the brink of drinking after 14 years in recovery]. I was on the brink of taking my life, panicked, shaking, feeling trapped, [but] I somehow knew to call Lifeline.*

*"I was struggling to gather my thoughts and pacing my house thinking about taking the final step. I [called Lifeline and] spoke to a calm man who listened and offered short sentences of advice that I could manage to absorb. He talked me down to a point I could get off the phone – still very shaken but much more manageable. He was even able to get me to laugh a little!*

*"I have wanted to give feedback to this gentleman for months, but how do you put into words [the] gratitude to someone that saves your sobriety and life, in a moment where you could have made a permanent decision for a temporary problem?*

*"I returned to AA the following day and am working on myself. I'm sorry, I don't know his name, but in my moment of despair he sat with me in the mud, so I wasn't alone. I will forever hold him in my memory and gratitude.*

*"Thank you, Lifeline, for saving my life."*

**Moments like these happen every day, where Lifeline counsellors offer a steady voice in moments of darkness. A single Lifeline call can change – or even save – a life.**



**This Christmas, you can gift a call to Lifeline for just \$36 – helping ensure someone in crisis has a chance to find hope again.**

Wisdom Can't Be Googled:

## Celebrating Older New Zealanders

# Enliven

**This year's International Day for Older Persons on 1 October, Enliven invited New Zealanders to pause and celebrate the wisdom, resilience and insight of older people.**

Enliven supports more than 31,500 older people nationwide through a mix of aged care and community-based services. More than 3,000 staff and 850 volunteers help older Kiwis maintain independence, connect with their communities, and live fulfilling lives.

*"Older New Zealanders bring a lifetime of experience and insight," says Wendy Hoskin, General Manager Health and Disability for PSN. "They've nurtured families, shaped communities, adapted to incredible social and technological changes, and continue to make meaningful contributions every day. Supporting their independence and focusing on wellness, not just illness, benefits everyone."*

With Aotearoa New Zealand's population ageing steadily – driven by declining fertility rates and

increased life expectancy – the contributions of older people as employees, volunteers, carers, and business owners are more important than ever. Yet ageism and negative stereotypes still persist, leaving many older people feeling isolated or undervalued. By 2040, it is projected that one in four New Zealanders will be over the age of 65.

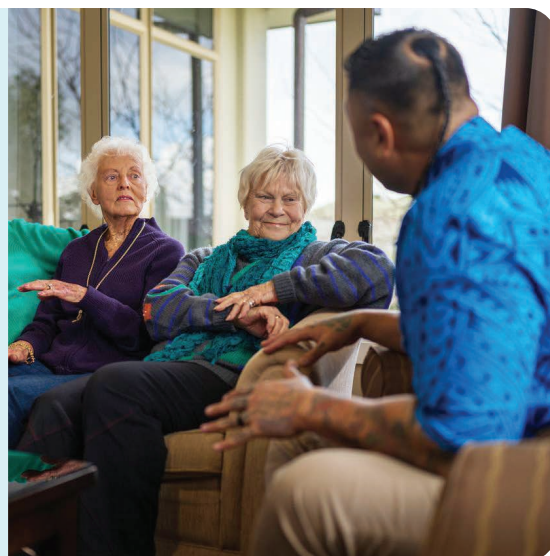
"We all have much to learn from older people, who have given so much to society," she adds. "Yet negative stereotypes can cloud how we see them. It's important we challenge these misconceptions and value their ongoing contributions."

"Adopting a wellness-focused approach and treating people with dignity and respect isn't just good care – it's good for society as a whole," Wendy concludes.

To mark the day, Enliven launched a national online survey asking Kiwis how society can better respect and support older people.

**Enliven encouraged everyone to celebrate older people in four simple ways:**

- 1 Mentorship** – connect with older people and learn from their experience.
- 2 Visits** – a phone call or visit can make a huge difference.
- 3 Storytelling** – listen to their stories or encourage them to record them for future generations.
- 4 Connection** – foster interactions between different generations for learning, joy and laughter.



**Celebrating older people isn't just about marking a day on the calendar – it's about valuing their contributions every day.** Whether through a visit, a story, or simply showing respect, small actions can have a big impact. To learn more about Enliven's services and support for older people, visit [enlivennorthern.org.nz](https://enlivennorthern.org.nz)



## Supporting Those Whose Christmas Isn't Safe



Her story is a powerful reminder that abuse can happen to anyone – and that the right support can give women and children the chance to be safe, even during the holiday season.



Read Hannah's full story here:  
**[2shine.org.nz/christmas-appeal-2025](https://2shine.org.nz/christmas-appeal-2025)**

\* Name changed to protect identity

*This Christmas, your support can help families like Hannah's find refuge, protection and hope.*



**I would like to help this Christmas.**

Postal Address (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to us in the post to: PSN, PO Box 99890, Newmarket, Auckland 1149, or take a photo of the completed form and email it to: **[supporter.relations@psn.org.nz](mailto:supporter.relations@psn.org.nz)**

**Please accept my gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_** *All donations for \$5 or more are tax deductible.*

**Please use my:** ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

CVV:    Name on card:  Signature:

Please debit my monthly gift on the  of each month (or the next working day).

My authorisation to regularly debit the specified amount from my credit card account will continue after the expiry date of the credit card and with the issuance of a new card until further notice. I may terminate this authority at any time by giving written notice to Presbyterian Support Northern (PSN) at least 5 days before any due date. My payment will be processed through the Flo2Cash payment gateway and PSN will not disclose the above credit card information to any other party or use it for any other purpose without my consent. PSN aims to preserve the confidentiality of all personal information it holds in accordance with the NZ Privacy Act 2020. Personal card details will only be used for the purposes of this donation.

